

Message Text

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43

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1262

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, EGEN, UK, EI

SUBJECT: ULSTER REACTION TO CALLAGHAN ELECTION AND
HEALEY BUDGET

1. REACTIONS REFLECTED LOCAL MEDIA TO ASCENDANCY
JAMES CALLAGHAN TO PREMIERSHIP AND CHANCELLOR HEALEY'S
BUDGET PROPOSALS FOLLOWED CUSTOMARY LINES OF THEIR
POSSIBLE IMPACT ON LOCAL SCENE. CALLAGHAN SELECTION
RECEIVED FULL APPROVAL ONLY FROM MINISCULE NORTHERN
IRELAND LABOUR PARTY. GENERAL ATTITUDE OF SOCIAL
DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY (SDLP) WAS THAT IT
PROBABLY WOULD MAKE NO REAL DIFFERENCE.
LOYALISTS GAVE CAUTIOUS WELCOME. IN EFFECT, ALMOST
ANYBODY WOULD BE BETTER THAN HAROLD WILSON, TEMPERED
BY THEIR RECALLING THAT CALLAGHAN HAD DEMONSTRATED LESS
THAN COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF SITUATION DURING PREVIOUS
INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND ACTIVITIES. PROVISIONAL
IRA REACTION PREVIOUSLY REPORTED. ALMOST ALL GROUPS,
FOR DIFFERENT REASONS, SEEKING EARLY MEETINGS WITH
NEW PM. SECURITY REMAINS PRIMARY CONCERN IN
NORTHERN IRELAND AS DEATH TOLL FROM VIOLENCE THIS YEAR
PASSED 100 MARK. THERE 101 PEOPLE DEAD IN 98 DAYS OF
1976. THIS WORST FOR PERIOD IN ANY YEAR SINCE TROUBLES BEGAN
AND ULSTER WONDERS WHETHER CALLAGHAN CAN DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

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IN PROSPECT TRANSFER SECSTATE MERLYN REES AND HIS REPLACEMENT

BY UNKNOWN QUANTITY, GRUDGING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BEGINNING
BE HEARD THAT PERHAPS REES NOT SO BAD AFTER ALL. LOYALISTS
APPREHENSIVE THAT REES REPLACEMENT WILL BE STANLEY ORME.

2. HEALEY BUDGET PROPOSALS RECEIVED GENERALLY FAVORABLE
REACTION. THERE VERY LITTLE CRITICISM LOCALLY OF WHAT
SEEMS BE MAIN ISSUE IN METROPOLITAN PRESS - THAT HEALEY
GAVE UNDUE RATIFICATION POWER TO TRADE UNIONS. NORTHERN
IRELAND ANALYSES CONCENTRATING ON THEME THAT NEW BUDGET
WOULD CUT SOME HEAVY TAXES AND WOULD ALLOT GREATER
PERCAPITA SHARE TO NORTHERN IRELAND THAN PREVIOUSLY.

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